

LEAD *Educator*



CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

SUMMER 2003

MISSION STATEMENT

The LEAD *Educator* is a quarterly publication of the Long Beach Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Our goal is to provide news and information about childhood lead poisoning prevention measures for parents, childcare providers and the medical community.

In addition, we provide current information on lead poisoning screening and legislative measures.

NEWS

Yan Chin, MD Speaks at Long Beach Memorial

Yan Chin, MD, MPH, Medical Officer of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch, Care Management Section from the California Department of Health Services (DHS) spoke to local Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP) physicians and medical staff on July 9, 2003. The midday conference took place at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center's Houssels Forum. Other guest speakers included: Felix Aguilar, MD, CHDP Director for Long Beach's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) who presented current lead screening statistics for the City of Long Beach and Helene Calvet, MD, Public Health Physician also with Long Beach DHHS who spoke about pediatric tuberculosis in Long Beach.

In addition to his official status as Medical Officer within the DHS, Dr. Chin is a practicing pediatrician in San Francisco and is knowledgeable of pediatric lead poisoning. In his presentation, "*Questions Docs Really Want Answered About Childhood Lead Poisoning*," Dr. Chin reviewed several studies that looked at low lead exposures and children's poor school behavior. In addition, he emphasized the need for further lead screenings by demonstrating that the incidence of abnormal lead results in California's children (1:500), was higher than breast cancer screening (1:1300).

Furthermore, Dr. Chin acknowledged that physicians could improve the clinical outcome of children who are lead poisoned because merely identifying (screening) children for lead will trigger services such as nutritional evaluation, behavior modification and other appropriate referrals such as speech therapy.

In addition, screening children for lead will prompt a Public Health Nurse and Registered Environmental Health Specialist to conduct an environmental investigation of the home. Furthermore, screening one child often identifies other children in the household that may have been exposed to lead. It is important to note that these services do not drain funds from other health care needs. Childhood lead screening funding resulted from California lawsuit against the lead paint / lead industry in the early 1990's.

Finally, Dr. Chin recommended that pregnant women should also be screened for lead if they work in occupations with significant risk of lead exposure, have a lead poisoned child living with them or are newly arrived immigrants.

We Would Like to Hear from You!

Dear friends,

This is the sixth edition of the LEAD *Educator* and we are planning to expand the distribution of this publication. Some of you have been our readers since inception the fall of 2001. Now we would like to hear from you. Let us know what you think of this publication by filling out the attached postcard survey. Don't forget to fill in your name, title, the name of your organization, and phone number where you can be reached during business hours. All comments are welcome.

Sincerely,
Editorial Staff

National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week:

October 19- 25, 2003

This week is recognized nationally as childhood lead poisoning awareness and prevention. The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will be sponsoring several outreach and education events throughout the Long Beach area.

Save the Date!!!

HEALTH EDUCATION

What You Should Know About Imported Canned Food

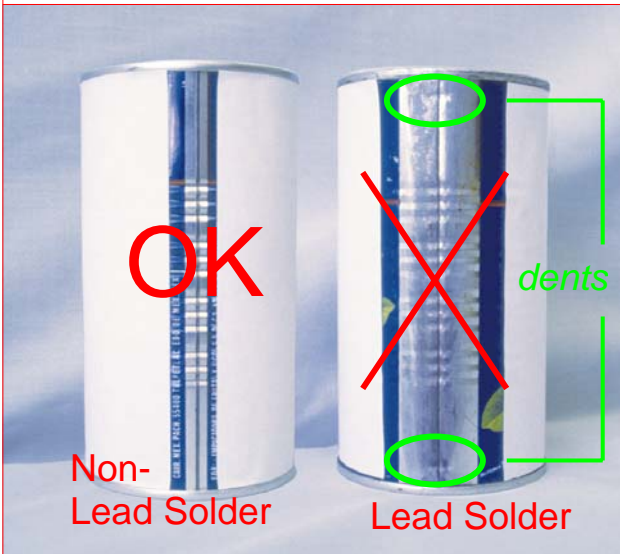
Although lead poisoning from canned food is less common today, it is often a source not easily recognized in children and adults. Though the chances of ingesting lead from food packaged in the United States are rare, it is important to be aware of imported canned foods and other packaged food items, such as candy wrappers. According to the Food and Drug Administration, as of November of

1991, lead soldered cans were no longer produced for food storage in the United States.

Consumers often ask why such toxic substances are used in food. Lead (Pb) is specifically used as a soldering agent in the canning process because it is cheap and its physical properties makes it ideal for soldering while making the can seam leak proof. The problem occurs when the lead solder leaches into the food inside the can. Food containers that in the past have been known to contain

high amounts of lead in the seams come from many countries. Examples are; canned evaporated milk from Russia (*Pictured above*), canned fish, fruit and vegetables from Thailand and China and candy wrappers from Mexico. These foods are part of the larger imported food industry and are tied to local ethnic groups here in Los Angeles County who consumes them.

In a random sample of three local grocery stores, the Long Beach Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program collected 10 cans. These include canned coconut milk, fish, fruit and vegetables from Indonesia, China, Thailand, Chile, Peru and Mexico. All cans were tested and found to have no lead on the seam.



What to look for:

As a general rule, be cautious of imported food cans with wide seams and gray residue along the seam. If the can has small indentations (dents), it is also a sign that the can may have lead solder (*Can pictured right*). Lead free cans have a thin sharply defined blue or black paint along the seam (*Can pictured left*), or no seam at all.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Report

Current Open Cases Under Management:

121

New Lead Cases For (Mar-July, 2003):

6

CHDP Provider PM 160 Lead Report (July 02 to June 03)

No. of 1-2 year old children visits:

8640

No. of 1-2 year old children tested for lead:

1571

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EDITORS:

José Llamas, HE II,
Kathy Ouchi, RN.PHN,
Program Coordinator

For additional information, please call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (562) 570-4203 or (562) 570-4083 (Spanish)

Medi-Cal and Healthy Families

Call: (562) 570-8770

Or

1 (800) 832-2307

INFORMATION ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

California Department of Health Services

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/childlead/>

Alliance for Healthy Homes

<http://www.afhh.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm>

T.D.D. (562) 570-4230

This document is available in an alternative format by request: (562) 570-4083